

Observations, Descriptions, and Identifications

Careful observations and detailed descriptions are investigative tools.

Observations help you build descriptions of persons, objects, places, and events so that who or what was seen may later be identified. Observations also help you find or identify persons, objects, and places from descriptions built by others.

Descriptions help you relate to others what you have seen. Descriptions may be either written or oral. They include signs, gestures, sketches, and other means to convey information about what was seen by an observer.

Most people are not trained or experienced in remembering and evaluating what they see. Thus the observations and descriptions of witnesses may not be as detailed nor as objective as those made by trained observers like investigators. Trained observers know that their observations can be affected by lack of sleep, or by illness, or by other outside influences. And they make allowances for outside influences when they interpret what they see.

Environmental factors like weather and light can influence what people see. The presence of unrelated, distracting circumstances can influence what people see by focusing their attention in a particular direction. For example, a spectator watching an exciting play on a football field may fail to note the actions of a person sitting next to him. And the passing of time between when an event is seen and when it is recalled can cause the observer to forget or confuse details of the event, thus influencing his description of what he saw. Where an observer is at the time he sees an event influences what he sees. It is unlikely that more than one or two people will view an event from exactly the same place. Thus, a difference in location may account for a difference in observation. Someone observing an event from a great distance may be able to give a good overall description of what took place. But he might

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not be able to see and give the details that someone seeing the same event at close range could give. On the other hand, the closer person may be unsure of the overall picture.

Psychological, physiological, and experiential factors influence what people see and how they retain the information. People tend to evaluate and interpret what they observe by their past experiences with like incidents. They tend to compare the size of an object, for instance, with the size of another object with which they are familiar. A very short or very tall person may fail to judge another's height correctly. Someone 6 feet tall may seem "very tall" to an observer only 4 feet 10 inches tall. The same 6-footer would appear to be "normal height" to a person 5 feet 10 inches tall.

Common sounds, odors, tastes, and other perceptions are usually understood by an observer. But a lifelong urban resident of a big city might not be able to accurately describe a farm scene. Nor could a native of a tropical island be expected to describe a high-speed car accident in minute detail. Stimuli which cannot be easily compared to a past experience are often mistakenly interpreted in terms of familiar things. And, too, a wrong interpretation of a past experience may influence the perception of a present experience.

Interests also affect perception. For instance, many young American boys can quickly recognize and identify the make and model of a car. On the other hand, they may fail to perceive details of the driver, license number, or make and condition of the tires. Special interest training may increase someone's power of observation. But it also may limit the focus of attention, causing the loss of other details. Specialists often have acute perception within their own field but fail to be observant in other fields. An artist may take special note of color, form, and proportion but fail to discern or properly interpret sounds or odors. Conversely, a mechanic may quickly note the sound of a motor or an indication of the state of repair of a car but fail to clearly discern the appearance and actions of the driver.

A person's power to accurately observe and interpret things can be affected by pain, hunger, fatigue, or an unnatural position of his body. Discomfort may cause an observer to fail to correctly interpret things he would normally comprehend. The senses of taste and smell are often distorted by physical ills and external stimuli. These senses are generally the least reliable basis for interpretation. The presence of a strong taste or odor may completely hide the presence of other tastes or odors.

Emotions like fear, anger, or worry and mental sets like prejudice or irrational thinking patterns may impair perception. For example, a victim of a robbery may have been in great fear of the weapon used by the criminal. He or she may only be able to recall the size of the bore of the weapon and not be able to describe the offender. Such a person might be expected to exaggerate the size of the bore. Or an observer may so dislike another person that he only views the actions of that person and nothing else. Sometimes an observer may have great prejudice against a class or race of people. For example, a person who dislikes police may unwittingly permit this prejudice to affect his view of the actions of a night watchman or a security guard. How he interprets what he sees may be wrong, even if his senses recorded a true report of what occurred.

Good observation requires the skillful use of the five senses to give meaning to what is going on around the observer. The senses of sight and hearing are used most often, but the senses of smell, taste, and touch are also important to observations and descriptions. The ability to observe improves with practice. Events or spoken words that may mean little when seen or heard by an untrained observer may be very meaningful to the trained investigator.

OBSERVATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS BY INVESTIGATORS

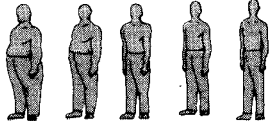
For investigators a *systematic* approach to observation and description is a must. So is the use of photographs, sketches, notes, and other recording methods. They help you remember what you observe, and they improve the accuracy of your description. Generally, accuracy is most assured if you follow a set pattern. The pattern used most often for observations starts with general features and moves to specific features. For example, when observing to develop a description of a person, you look first at the general features like sex, height, and race. Then you check exact features like color of hair and eyes, unusual scars, or behaviors. Last, you note changeable characteristics like clothing and hair style.

However, when observing persons to try to match them to a description, you may change or reverse your pattern of observation. This is

most likely if the person you are looking for has some very noticeable feature. For example, if you are looking for a man with a limp, the first feature you would look for would be the limp. You would then look at general features and go on to note specific features. But even reversed, you are still following a pattern, still using a systematic approach.

PERSONS

When observing and describing persons, first note a person's general features. General features include sex, skin color, height, build and posture, weight, age, and complexion. Then, observe and describe the person's specific features. Your pattern of observation and description of the specific characteristics of a person normally begins with the head and progresses downward.

NOTABLE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS						
SEX	SKIN COLOR	HEIGHT	BUILD and POSTURE	WEIGHT	AGE	COMPLEXION
Male Female	White Black Red Yellow Other Unknown	Exact or Esti- mated in 2-inch incre- ments	Large, average, small Obese, very stout, stocky, medium, slim Straight (erect) medium, stooped Angular, muscular rounded Bust (for females) flat, medium, heavy 	Exact or Esti- mated in 10- pound incre- ments	Exact or Esti- mated in 5-year incre- ments	Pale, fair, dark, ruddy, sallow, sickly pale, florid (for whites) Light brown, dark brown, dark olive (for blacks) Clear, pimpled, blotched, freckled, pockmarked Make-up — none, light, heavy

Begin by describing the size and shape of the head. Then move to the profile. Mentally divide it into three parts. Describe each third in separate detail and in relation to the whole. (The profile, unless it has a peculiarity, is not as useful as the shape of the face for identifying people.) Then describe the hair. Give both natural and artificial color of the hair if it has been altered. Describe its texture, density, appearance and style. You may use current descriptive terms for hair styles. Wigs, toupees, and hairpieces should be described carefully and in detail. You can often tell if someone is wearing a hairpiece by its difference in texture, color, density, or type from the hair elsewhere on the head. False hair will often be too nearly perfect. And the edges of a hairpiece are often evident under close scrutiny.

When describing the face, give the shape and details of the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, lips, teeth, chin, and ears. Look closely at the nose. Has it been broken? Does it twist to the right or left? Is it turned up, pendulous, hairy, or deep-pored? Note the color of the eyebrows, eyes, and lips. If makeup is used to modify or enhance the complexion, include this information. When describing females, indicate both natural and artificial contours if you can. Be alert for the use of lipstick to alter or accent the natural appearance of the lips. Note equipment like glasses and hearing aids.

Contact lenses may be hard to see. Watery eyes and excessive blinking sometimes are a hint of contact lenses. Make careful note of special types of eyeglasses like monocles, pince-nez, and bifocals. Do the same for special types of hearing aids.











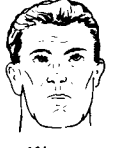

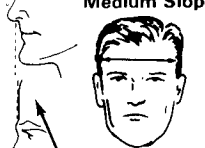
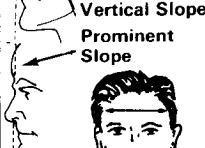
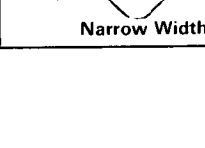




Go on to describe the rest of the person in this same way, moving always downward. When describing the length of the arms in relation to the rest of the body, keep in mind that an average arm length places the heel of the hand about half-way between the hips and the knees when the arm is hanging naturally. Note oddities or deformities of the hands and fingers in detail. Missing or crooked fingers, for instance, are hard to disguise. They make good first checks of suspects. The same is true for marks and scars. Describe birthmarks, moles, warts, tattoos, and scars by size, color, location, and shape. Be as detailed as you can.




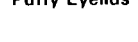








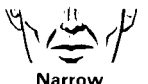








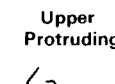










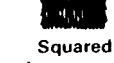

The tone and manner of a person's speech can be an important part of a description. Habitual tone should be noted as low, medium, or loud; soft or gruff; or by other descriptive qualities. State the manner of speaking as cultured, vulgar, clipped, fluent, or using broken English. Identify accents when possible. If the person is not speaking English, try to recognize the language he is using. Note oddities of, or handicaps to, speech: a stutter, a nasal twang, a pronounced drawl, or a mute condition.


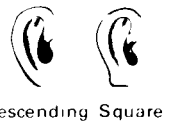
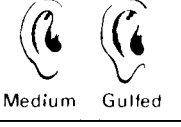
Since a person may change his clothing, its descriptive value is limited. But look for dress habits like neatness, carelessness, and style preference. These do not change as readily. Clothing worn by a person at the time of an offense, however, or when the person was last seen, should be described in detail. List this by type: military, civilian, mixed military and civilian, and color. And give the condition of the clothes: clean, soiled, torn, ragged, greasy, or bloodstained.

Be sure to include remarks about personal appearance. Use terms like neat or untidy; well-groomed or unkempt; refined or rough.

A person's odd mannerisms or traits may form the main or key part of a description. Be alert for feminine traits in a man and masculine traits in a woman. Watch how the person walks, moves, or talks. Does the person show signs of nervousness or indecision? Look for subconscious mannerisms. Is the person often seen scratching the nose, running a hand through the hair, pulling on an ear, hitching up the pants, jingling keys, or flipping coins? Look for facial tics, muscular twitches, or excessive gesturing with the hands. And note any pieces of jewelry being worn.

NOTABLE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS				
HEAD	FACE	HAIR	FOREHEAD	EYEBROWS
<p>Size — large, medium, small</p> <p>Shape — long, short, broad, narrow, round, flat in back, flat on top, eggshaped, high in crown, bulging in back</p>  <p>Flat In Back</p>  <p>Flat On Top</p>  <p>Egg-Shaped</p>  <p>Bulging In Back</p>	<p>Round</p>  <p>Round</p> <p>Square</p>  <p>Square</p> <p>Oval</p>  <p>Oval</p> <p>Broad</p>  <p>Broad</p> <p>Long</p>  <p>Long</p>	<p>Color — blond, brown, red, auburn, black, gray, streaked gray, white; light or dark; natural or artificial</p> <p>Density — thick, thin, medium, sparse</p> <p>Hairline — low, medium, receding, receding over temples</p> <p>Baldness — complete, whole top of head, occipital, frontal, receding, or combined</p> <p>Type — straight, wavy, curly, kinky</p> <p>Texture — fine, medium, coarse</p> <p>Appearance — neat, bushy, unkempt, oily, dry</p> <p>Style — long, medium, short; parted on left, on right, not parted; page-boy, corn row</p> <p>Wig or toupee</p>  <p>Frontal Balding</p>  <p>Wavy Coarse</p>	<p>Shape — high, medium, low</p> <p>Slope — receding, medium, vertical, prominent, bulging</p> <p>Width — wide, medium, narrow</p> <p>Wrinkles or age lines — none, light, deep, horizontal, curved up or down, vertical</p> <p>← Receding Slope</p>  <p>Wide Width Medium Slope</p>  <p>Medium Width Vertical Slope</p>  <p>Prominent Slope</p>  <p>Narrow Width</p>	<p>Color — and if same or different from hair color</p> <p>Shape — slanted up, down, horizontal from center of face straight, arched, separated, connected, plucked, penciled</p> <p>Texture — heavy, medium, thin</p> <p>Hair length — long</p>  <p>Thin Line</p>  <p>Arched</p>  <p>Straight Connected</p>  <p>Heavy, Long Hair</p>

NOTABLE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS				
EYES	NOSE	MOUTH	LIPS	MOUSTACHE AND BEARD
<p>Shape — sunken, medium, bulging</p> <p>Spacing — wide, medium, narrow</p> <p>Color</p> <p>Crossed, watery, red</p> <p>Eyelids — normal, drooping, puffy, red</p> <p>Eyelashes — color; length — long, medium, short; shape - straight; curled, drooping</p> <p>Makeup — none, light, dark, irregular; color, type, extent</p> <p>Glasses — style; color of frames and lenses, how attached to the face; type — monocle, pince-nez, bifocals</p>	<p>Length — short, medium, long</p> <p>Width — thin, medium, thick</p> <p>Projection — long, medium, short</p> <p>Shape of base — turned up, horizontal, turned down</p> <p>Juncture w/forehead — flat, small, medium, large</p> <p>Line — concave, straight, convex (hooked), Roman, aquiline</p> <p>Nostrils — medium, wide, narrow; large or small; high or low; elongated or flaring</p> <p>Oddities — broken, twisted left or right, turned up, pendulous, hairy deep-pored</p>	<p>Size — small, medium large</p> <p>Expression — stern, sad, pleasant, smiling</p> <p>Oddities — twitching, habitually open</p>	<p>Shape — thin, medium, thick (frontal); long, medium, short (profile)</p> <p>Color</p> <p>Position — normal; protruding lower, upper, both</p> <p>Appearance — smooth, chapped, puffy, loose, compressed, retracted over teeth, moist, dry</p> <p>Oddities like hairlip</p>	<p>Color — and if same or different from hair color</p> <p>Style</p> <p>Shape</p> <p>Grooming</p>
 Narrow  Close Together  Puffy Eyelids  Bulging, Wide Spaced  Glasses	 Aquiline  Roman  Convex  Concave	 Small  Medium  Large  Narrow  Medium  Wide  Short  Turned Up	 Thin  Medium  Thick  Upper Protruding  Lower Protruding  Distance between upper lip and nose	 Straight  Curved  Divided  Handlebar  Mandarin  Rounded  Double Pointed  Squared  Van Dyke  Henry VIII  Side Whiskers

NOTABLE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS				
TEETH	EARS	NECK	SHOULDERS	BACK
Color — very white, normal, stained, gold Size — small, medium, large Shape — receding, normal, protruding, even, pointed Condition — broken, decayed, false, missing, w/gaps	Size — small, medium, large Shape — oval, round, triangular, rectangular Lobes — descending, square, medium, gulfed Separation from head — close, normal, protruding	Size — short, long Shape — straight, curved, thick, thin Adam's apple — large (prominent), medium, small	Size — large, medium, small; narrow, medium, broad Shape — square, round, level, one side lower (frontal); straight stooped, slumped, humped (profile)	Rear view — straight or curved Profile — straight, curved, humped, bowed
		CHEST	ARMS	HIPS
		Front view — broad, medium, narrow Profile — deep, flat, medium	Length — long, medium, short Musculature — slight, medium, heavy	Front view — broad, medium, narrow Profile — small, medium, large
CHIN	Setting — low, normal, high (the corner of the eye is usually in line w/ upper third of the ear) Hearing aid — color; which ear; located behind or inside ear, w/cord, w/o cord	TRUNK	HANDS	LEGS
Shape — receding, jutting (profile) short, medium, long (frontal) Size — small, large, pointed, square, dimpled, cleft, double		long, medium, or short in relation to body size	Size — small, medium, or large in relation to body size Oddities	Length — long, medium, or short in relation to rest of body (average legs plus hips equal about half the body length) Shape — straight, bowed, knock-kneed Musculature — slight, medium, heavy
CHEEKS		WAIST	FINGERS	FEET
Shape — full, bony, angular, fleshy, sunken, flat Placement — high (prominent), medium, receding Make up — heavy, light, color, placement	 Round Triangular  Descending Square  Medium Gulfed	small, medium, large	Length — long, medium, short Shape thin, medium, thick (stubby) Deformities — missing fingers, disfigured nails	Size — small, medium, or large, in relation to rest of body Deformities — pigeon-toed, flat-footed, club-footed
		ABDOMEN		
		flat, medium, protruding		

OBJECTS

The pattern of observation you use to describe objects is like the pattern you use to describe people. You go from the general to the specific. And you use this same pattern when trying to find objects to match a description already built.

Start with general features that clearly define the broad category of the object. This prevents its being confused with objects of

other classes. Note its type, size, and color. Look for other general features that are easy to discern and that may help give quick, sure recognition. Then go on to describe the object's specific features that set it off from all other like items. Does the car have a sun roof? Is the radio or typewriter portable? Next, look for damage or alterations. Last, look for serial numbers or other identifying marks or labels.

Your observation and description should follow a general flow. Move from top to bottom, or from front to rear, or from left to right. Distinguishing marks, scratches, alterations, damaged parts, worn areas, signs of repair, faded paint, serial numbers, identifying markings, and missing parts should be noted in detail. For example, when observing and describing a typewriter, begin with the brand name. Then go on to list it as “nonportable, model 17, 11-inch carriage, light gray with ivory keys and black lettering, serial number J17-123456.” Include remarks like “Letter H key is bent and strikes below the line. Numeral 5 key is bent and sticks in the forward position. When struck, it must be returned manually to the rear position.” Whatever the object, you follow the same procedure.

DESCRIPTION OF A MAN'S SUIT

Brand XXXX; dark blue; wool worsted; coat size 42 regular; half-lined with dark blue silk; coat lapels of wide width; single-breasted with three black buttons; four small black buttons on each sleeve; small tear in lining on right outside coat pocket; trousers size 33-inch waist, 34-inch length; unlined; not pleated; cuffs, 1 1/2 inches wide; and cleaner's mark JHO stamped in black on the inside of the waistband.

EVENTS

If you are present when an unlawful event occurs, you must observe it systematically and quickly. Take in the important factors of time, place, persons, objects, and actions involved, as well as the immediate results of the event. These factors are involved in the essential questions of who, what, when, where, and why. But in most cases you arrive at the scene of an incident after the crime has occurred. Hence, you seldom see an event as it takes place. Your observation of connected actions after an event, however, may give major clues to what did take place.

Small but important actions or events often provide an important lead for an investigation. Remarks, states of excitement, gestures, looks of concern, and unlikely claims of lack of knowledge can all be clues.

You may get leads from such things as the way a fire burned, the presence of certain fumes or odors, the sound of a voice, or the warmth of a body. Such deduction may aid in reconstructing an event's cause, start, or progress. You must recognize related acts or conditions and understand them correctly.

Your description of an event must be as complete as circumstances allow. It should contain the facts of time, place, order of action, objects and persons involved, and what happened because of these factors. To get a thorough and logical description of an event, think about it in terms of your observations. Consider statements made by witnesses and suspects. And evaluate the physical evidence from the crime scene. Support your description of an event with sketches and photographs if they are needed.

PLACES

To show the exact scene of an incident or crime, you may have to make detailed observations of places and locales. Your purpose may be to connect the place to an incident. Or it may be to connect the place to information given by a witness.

Your descriptions should cite the elements you observe. Your goal is to give a concise and easily understood word picture of the scene. Sketches and photographs, when appropriate, will add to your word description. Your pattern of observation will depend on whether you are looking at an outdoor scene or an indoor scene.

When observing and describing outdoor scenes, go from the general to the specific. Look for natural or man-made landmarks. Note the general scene and its relation to roadways, railways, and/or shore lines. Use them to pinpoint the general site. Pinpoint the exact site in relation to fixed or semifixed features. Use features like buildings, bridges, or power line poles. View outstanding objects or features within the scene. Check details of the scene and items of high interest. Some outdoor sites may not have such landmarks. Then you must mentally assign boundaries to the area. Use boundaries that are neither too far apart or too close together. A common sense approach is a must.

DESCRIPTION OF AN OUTDOOR SCENE

The incident took place in Anniston, AL, near the intersection of Quintard and First Streets. The exact location was the east sidewalk of First Street, 10 feet due north of a fire hydrant. The hydrant is on the east side of First Street about 20 feet north of the corner (curb) of Quintard and First Streets.

Observing and describing an indoor scene is easier. Indoor scenes have obvious

and definite boundaries like walls, hallways, and basements. But because an indoor area often contains many objects, it is very important to use a methodical pattern of observation.

First, note the location of the place to be observed. Say if it is at the front or rear of the building and at what floor level. Then check the distances to stairways, entries, elevators, or the like. Next, get the room number or other designation. Observe details near entries to the area that is the specific point of concern. Note objects located within the area. Last, get the exact location as it relates to other objects of concern.

DESCRIPTION OF AN INDOOR SCENE

The incident took place in Room 204 of the Union Hotel, at 1052 Moore Avenue, Anniston, AL. Room 204 is on the second floor of the hotel, directly above the Moore Avenue entrance. The room is reached by the elevator to the left, or the stairway to the right, of the Moore Avenue entrance.

The door to Room 204 is wood, covered with red leather-like material. The room number is printed on it in 2-inch black letters. Inside, and to the immediate left of the entrance, is a dark upright piano. On the piano stands a large white vase and two single brass candlesticks with red candles. Against the left wall, facing the center of the room, is a dark blue standard-size sofa. On the sofa are two red and one white triangular pillows. At each end of the sofa is a dark brown end table with glass top. Each end table supports a 3-foot high brass table lamp with light blue shade. The lamp on the table nearest the door is overturned and rests partly on the sofa arm. An empty drinking glass is on the opposite end table.

In the wall opposite the entrance are two double-sash casement windows. The windows are furnished with dark red brocade drapes closely drawn. Between the windows is a movable serving bar. The front of the bar is covered with red leather-like material. On the left end of the bar stands an empty water pitcher and two empty drinking glasses. Near the center of the bar is one drinking glass containing about 1 1/2-inches of light brown liquid. On the right end of the bar is an empty glass bowl about 3-inches deep and 10-inches in diameter. Under the bar is a square wooden wastebasket containing three empty bottles and many glass fragments. Next to the

wastebasket is a wooden case containing nine empty assorted soft drink bottles. Six bar stools are in front of the bar. The stools have round seats covered with red leather-like material. Each has three black metal legs fastened to the floor with screws. The entire wall behind the bar and between the two windows is mirrored. At either end of the mirror are three glass shelves on which rest numerous inverted drinking glasses. Beneath the mirror is a glass-topped wooden shelf 10-inches wide. This shelf contains seven open and four sealed bottles of what appears to be intoxicants.

On the wall to the right of the entrance, 3 feet from the opposite wall, is a door leading to a bathroom. Eight feet along this wall from the bathroom door is a door connecting with Room 206. This door is locked at the time of observation. Between these two doors is a dark brown table with a wooden top about 2 feet by 2 feet in size. There is one dining-room chair upholstered with maroon leather-like material at the table.

Three tables of this same type are in the center of the room. Two upholstered dining chairs are at each. On each of these center tables, and on the table on the right side of the room, are two plates with partially eaten food servings.

At a point 10 feet from the entrance and 7 feet from the table near the right wall is an overturned dining chair. Its right front leg is broken but still attached to the chair. The chair leg is stained with a substance that appears to be blood.

In the center of the ceiling is a black brass, three-light chandelier. The floor of the room is completely covered by tan carpeting.

OBSERVATIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS BY WITNESSES

Observations, descriptions, and identifications made by witnesses can be highly useful to you as an investigator. Some persons may be able to give a concise and fact-filled account of what they have seen. But, in most cases, you must use skillful and patient questioning to help a witness to recall details of persons, objects, places, and events. Your questions will evoke the details which help give meaning to his observation.

It is important that you talk with witnesses as soon as possible after they have made their observations. Do this before they have time to talk to others or to change their observations, consciously or unconsciously, to fit a pattern of other things they may have seen or heard. Imaginative persons often use conjecture to fill in the gaps in their knowledge of an incident. This is particularly true if they later learn that the incident is important in an investigation. It is also important for you to evaluate a witness's information and compare it with all related data before you use it to investigate further. And you must be aware of, and make allowance for, the many factors that may influence a person's understanding and retention of the details he relates. You also need to keep in mind how conflicts can occur in statements made by different witnesses.

When obtaining a description from a witness, learn, if you can, of any influences affecting their understanding of what they saw. Find out if there are influences that might cause them to give false answers. Some witnesses may purposely withhold information so they will not become involved.

Most investigations call for quick action. Thus you must often proceed without full background data. This may make it hard to know what influences someone. But you can take steps to help tell the extent of these influences. You can develop the use of a pattern of recall to help get a clear word picture. It will improve your technique of getting descriptions of observations from others. You can talk to witnesses briefly before questioning them. This will put them at ease and help get them to talk freely. You may discover enough about them to know what may affect their interpretation of what they have seen. And you can ask the witnesses to repeat their descriptions. This may reveal discrepancies made on purpose or by incomplete observation. Ask about these flaws in an attempt to get a better description. Your questions may even lead a witness to admit he distorted the truth. A witness who lies or hides information often makes unconscious slips that you will note.

IDENTIFICATION

Having a witness or victim identify a person, a place, an object, or an event is the way you relate that factor to an incident. You must conduct identification efforts in a way that precludes errors or injustice. Before an identification is begun, make sure the witness has made as complete a description as he can. This will help avoid false identifications and reduce the chance for error. Let the witness identify a person or an object from among a *group* of like persons or objects. Showing a witness one weapon or one person to identify may confuse him. He may give a mistaken identification because the weapon or person was shown to him by you. To identify a place, have the witness describe its general location in relation to known

landmarks. Next, have him describe it in detail. Then he should be asked to take you to the scene.

COMPOSITES

Composite photographs or sketches are often used to help identify persons. Composites are developed from separate photographs or sketches of foreheads, eyes, noses, mouths, chins, or other facial features. The witness selects the example which most nearly looks like the particular facial feature of the person to be identified. But do not show a witness a photo lineup before having him help develop a composite. It may influence his memory of the subject.



Commercially manufactured kits can be used to make composite drawings or photos from verbal descriptions. The drawing from such a kit can resemble a person so closely it removes others from suspicion. And the kit model that uses true photos of facial features, hairstyles, eyeglasses, hats, and the like produces realistic photo-like composites.

If photographs or sketches of separate features are not available, many photographs of different persons or objects may be used. Have the witness pick out the features which most closely look like the person or object to be drawn. Or have an artist sketch a likeness of persons or objects from descriptions given by one or more witnesses. Even this kind of drawing or portrait may be useful to an investigation.

LINEUPS

Another way to identify suspects or objects is to use a lineup. A lineup can reduce mistakes and eliminate false identification of persons and objects. And it can avoid leading or misleading a witness.

A lineup must meet legal requirements. There are rules for picking people for the

lineup, their actions before and during the lineup, and control of the witnesses\victim. Tell the witnesses or victim of the rules that you must enforce.

For a lineup to be legal, it must meet the test for fundamental fairness. That means it cannot be impermissibly suggestive. *It must be composed of similar subjects having similar characteristics.* Anything which would hint that one of the participants is "the one" would be a defect in that lineup.

The location of a lineup is up to you. But it should be held in an area that is away from public view to keep from drawing unwanted attention or disturbance. If you are having a lineup of people, you need enough room for about six people to stand side by side. There is no specific number of participants you are required to have in a lineup. But having six or more persons, photographs, or objects is a number that works well for all three kinds of lineups. You may hold a lineup of objects at the site of an offense or in some other suitable place. Pick a place where one is likely to find such items. This may mean putting a car in a parking lot with other cars or putting a coat in a closet with other coats.

A lineup having only one participant is called a "showup." Due to the inherent suggestiveness of a showup, it is always closely scrutinized. Showups are generally considered poor practice. A showup, to be legal, should be done within a short time after the commission of a crime. If you must conduct a showup, it is preferable to do it at the scene.

Make sure the lighting is bright enough to let viewers see the lineup without any problems. When you conduct a lineup of people, arrange the lighting so that the suspect cannot see the viewers.

Do not let a witness see the suspect before the actual lineup. Tell witnesses exactly how the lineup will be controlled. Do this before they view it. *Do not tell witnesses that the suspect is in the lineup.* Do nothing to cause anyone to think he must make a statement about the lineup. You will, however, note any statement made during the lineup. If you plan to question a witness during the lineup, have the questions written out. *Do not let witnesses talk to each other.* One may have an unfavorable influence on another.

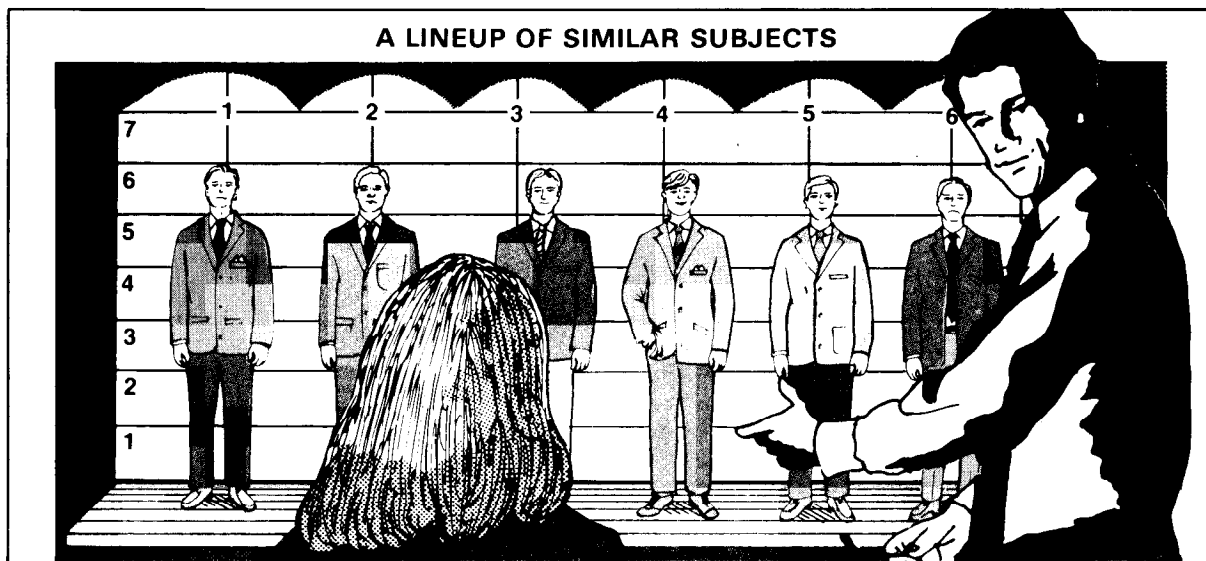
Pick people to fill the lineup who are of the same general physical description as the suspect. If a suspect wears glasses or has a beard, so should the rest of the lineup. And everyone should be wearing the same type of clothes. The clothing should be like that described by witnesses. But remove or cover

any unique uniforms, insignia, crests, ribbons, or name tags. If the perpetrator was wearing a hat, all people in the lineup should be wearing hats.

Give each person in the lineup a numbered card. Record by name and number each person's position in the lineup. Photograph the lineup to verify the location of each person in it. You may ask the lineup personnel to change direction. Simply tell them what direction you want them to face.

A suspect or accused is entitled to counsel at a lineup only when charges have been preferred or pretrial restraint under Rules for Courts-Martial (RCM) 304, MCM, has been imposed. When a lawyer is present, he may suggest how to conduct the lineup. However, he may not interfere with the actual conduct of the lineup. The suspect has no right to counsel at a photographic lineup, nor need the suspect be informed of, or present at, the lineup.

When you select pictures for a photographic lineup, make sure the persons in the pictures are reasonably alike in appearance. You may use identification cards for the lineup if the name on the card is not visible. Provide the witnesses with three or more viewings, varying the layout of the photographs each time. Photograph each layout. Identify the individual photos in the lineup and their positions in the layout. Record the results of each layout.



You must ensure that your photographic lineup cannot be condemned for having included suggestive procedures. Improper use of photos can cause witnesses to err in their identification. In no way should any suspect's photograph be emphasized. Do not imply to a witness that other evidence

indicates that one of the persons pictured committed the crime. Do not show a witness a picture of one person who generally resembles the person he saw. Save all of the photos used in a lineup. If the witness's identification of the suspect is contested, the photos will be needed in court.